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HARP

Soloist

OTHER BOOKS

PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED.

CHICAGO:

The Bow-Knot Publishing Co.

324 DEARBORN STREET.



Yours Faithfully,
Wm. L. Fischer.

HARP OF THE SOUTH



AND
OTHER
POEMS

BY

WILLIAM
LIGHTFOOT
VISSCHER

PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED.

CHICAGO:

The Bow-Knot Publishing Co.

324 DEARBORN STREET.

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Dedication.

With admiration for the men whose talents, genius and work accomplish beautiful things in art, and with special gratitude to that brilliant coterie from among them who by their illustrations in this volume have given it its best worth, the author esteems it an honor to inscribe this work to Messrs. Tom J. Nicholl, Angus McNeill, Tom E. Powers, Carolus Brenner, W. Wallace Denslow, Horace Taylor, Harry O. Landers and Wm. R. Goodall, artists, and Edward L. Powell, engraver.

HARP OF THE SOUTH



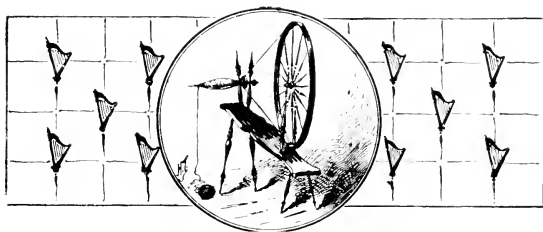
"HARP of the North," the Wizard sang,
And tuned his glowing lays
'Mid gallant deeds and battle's clang
And clan to clan's affrays.
Could I but sing so sweet a song—
And strong—as Scotia's bard,
I'd ring the charge of every wrong
Till tyranny set guard;
More fit, for me, a sweet refrain
Of home and long ago.
Harp of the South, I strike again
The dear, old, quaint banjo.
No organ's diapason swell,
In grand cathedral, dim,
E'er on the heart of novice fell,
In vesper's sacred hymn,
With more impress of love and soul,
And deep devotion true,
Than Southern song to mem'ry's goal
Thus borne, my harp, by you.
And now I sing, to the banjo ring,
In tune by memory led,

And hear a sound like whispers round
The grave of the Past, long dead;
 'Tis a whir and a hum,
 And a doleful thrum,
But music my heart can feel—
 I hear as before,
 In days of yore,
Black mammy's spinning wheel.

It brings me joy, as when a boy
 I sat in her cabin door,
And heard her sing to the spindle's ring,
As she paced the "puncheon" floor;
 From the dawn to the gloam,
 In the old South home,
A mammy true, black and leal,
 She trudged to and fro,
 In the long ago,
And wrought at her spinning wheel.

How blest the days, how sweet the ways,
 That Kate and I saw then—
My sister Kate, whom God and fate,
 Have taken to His Aidenn.
 Now 'neath the orange trees,

Kissed by each balmy breeze,
That thro' magnolias steal,
Under the bloom
Lies Katie's tomb,
And still's the spinning wheel.



"GYPSY."

My Sister Nan.



IS true! I'm gray, and bald, and old—
Not even blest with a little gold
But that sweet girl, she loves me well,
And why, you never could, ever tell
Ah, she is bright, and good, and fair,
And sunlight lives in her eyes and hair;
Yet both are black as noon of night
Her lips would tempt an anchorite.
And I love her, with all my soul—
No pitiful love, like a miser's dole—
My heart goes out to her as free
As a home-bound ship on a homeward sea.
And mine is a heart that's good and strong;
Old as it is it carries no wrong;
It has no crime nor sorrow to bear;
'Tis clear as the pure, intrenchant air.
Living are those who'll laugh at this;
But what care I for a serpent's hiss?
When snakes crawl near enough to feel,
I quietly grind them under my heel

But let me now the riddle unfold,
Why she loves me, so gray and old,
And she so young, and bright, and fair,
With sunlight in her eyes and hair.

I came, a veteran soldier, back
From war and desolation's track,
And, with my sword, I brought along
My minstrel harp, and soul and song.

She hung my sword in the old roof-tree,
And came and sat upon my knee;
"You are a poet," she said, "I know,
And that is why I love you so."

I am a man, and she a child,
And with my story she's beguiled,
For I'm a doting old brother, you see,
And she's a sister sweet to me.

A LITTLE SHOE.



HAR ain't much poetry, that's a fact,
In a pa'r of worn out shoes,
But I've seen truck agoin', that lacked
As much of soul, or the muse.

I've got a shoe, 'bout's big's my thumb,
All gone at the heel and toe,
That makes my poor old heartstrings thrum
To the tune of long ago.

It's the shoe of a little baby boy,
Who was two or three worlds to me.
He come and went, and took all the joy
That ever I reckon to see.

The mother that bore him went along,
And it broke my heart in two;
Sometimes I hear her lullaby song
When I'm holding that tiny shoe.

And I hear the patter of wee, small feet,
That fitted it when it was new,
But all that's left is the memory sweet,
And the little worn out shoe.

Thar ain't no poetry, much, in this,
But I think I've got the clue
To a road that leads to a mite of bliss,
If I follow this baby shoe.

A Wide Felt Want



I

'VE got a new tile, of the latest
spring style;

It's glossy, it's sleek, and all
that;

It is ever so swell, and goes
excellent well

With my better half's new
Easter hat.

But comfort and ease, I'll take,
if you please,

Beneath my own fig-tree and vine,
And worry along with my pipe and a song,
And that
slouchy old
felt of mine

That new spring tile, of elegant style,
Is hard, and as heavy as lead; [crown,
It weightens me down, and like the king's
Uncasiness brings to the head.
It makes a demand for a glove on my hand
With dress of the mode, and quite fine,
A dignified air and a quantum of care
Unknown
to that slouch
hat of mine.

There's trouble enough, and the road is full rough,
The easiest way we may go
The journey of life, its care and its strife,
Its trials, and burdens, and woe.
So, just if you please, I'll gather what ease
May lie in a goblet of wine,
The pipe and the song, that fairly belong,
With that
slouchy old
felt of mine.



JOSEPHETA.

To E. L. Powell.



REAT black eyes, with look so tender,
That they seem, almost to weep;
Hand that's taper, brown and slender,
Shades them peering up the steep,
From the "dobey" on the mesa,
Where the sun forever shines,
'Long the foothill, where the gazer,
Sees amid the tangled vines
And the crooked manzanita,
Su Chiquita!
La bonita.

There's a little Mexic maiden,
Golden-haired and eyes of blue,
With the summer flowers laden
Climbing down from where they grew.
Dusky-haired and dark-eyed mother—
Though mayhap the question's bold—
Whence those eyes of some one other,
Whence the shining locks of gold?
Tell me handsome Josepheta,
Of Chiquita,
La bonita.

Ah! I see yon caballero,
Riding thither down the trail—

Now he lifts his broad sombrero,
Shouts the Saxon's hearty hail,
And the flax-haired caballero
Has Chiquita's eyes of blue,
Shaded by his slouch sombrero—
Pretty answer that is, too,
For the handsome Josepheta,
And Chiquita,
La bonita



THE GOVERNOR'S VIOLIN.



MID the silken, perfumed elegance,
Within a stately house,
I've heard its rich tones ringing
Thro' the wilderings of Strauss,
And I've heard the sigh of gentle ones
Who listened while it bore
To charmed hearts, the sweetness
Of the touching "Trovatore."

I've heard it in the evening,
Within a quiet home,
Sing "Swanee River" till the bees
Came humming round the comb;
'Mid the phases of the wassail
And the joys of festal cheer,
I've heard it change from gay to grave,
From lively to severe.

In tender tones of pleading;
In sighs of spent delight;
In greetings to the morning
And in good-byes to the night;
In storms upon the ocean
And in the songs of birds,
I've heard its voice, like a living thing,
In sweetest human words.

I've heard it give, stentorian,
 Command in battle's blare,
And heard it whisper, soft and low,
 Like angels in the air.
Mong brawny men, in mining camps
 I've seen it hush a brawl,
Till clenched hands are open palms
 That in each other fall.

I've seen it gather little ones
 About the player's knee,
As did the babes of olden time
 'Round Him of Galilee.
And to it oft I've listened,
 Till all the world was kin,
While lovingly its master played
 The Governor's violin.

BARBARIC INDIGNATION.

To William Wilson Knott.



A GRIM barbaric warrior heard,
How Christ was crucified;
How meek and uncomplainingly
He bent his head and died.
He heard, aghast, the dreadful tale,

Then seethed with
wrath his brain;
“Had I been there with
three-score men,
The Christ had not
been slain.”

As thus he spoke he
fiercely grasped
The handle of his
brand;
In knots his brawny
muscles stood
And he austere and
grand.

“Where were His brave defenders
then?”

The chieftain might have asked,
Had he but longer in the light
Of Christian knowledge basked—

"Where then the zealous champions
Who thousands since have slain —
The 'unbelievers' slaughtered
By Inquisitors in Spain,
And in 'Bloody Mary's' reign?"

As 'twas he questioned, eagerly :
"Where were the God-man's friends—
They for whose immortal souls
He bent his aims and ends?
Stood they about and raised no hand
To stay the murd'rous deed?
Where were their love and fortitude
In this high time of need?
And where the healed in sight and limb,
Who sought the Nazarene,
And touched His garments full of faith
That this would make them clean?"

"We are fighting yet His holy cause,"
A churchman stoutly said;
"His name shall be our Shibboleth,
Till all His foes are dead."
And yet the grim barbarian
Clutched hard his sword and cried,
"Had I been there with three-score men
Christ Jesus had not died—
He'd not been crucified."



SORRY FOR THE LORD.



'M gittin' sorry fur you Lawd.

Indeed an' trufe, I am;

De niggah wants so monst'ous much,

Cep' Gilead an' de ba'm.

Dey prays fur ev'rything dey needs,

Dat work would bring 'em all,

An' wants de fruit of all de 'arth,

Jis' like befo' de fall.

I heard one niggah prayin', Lawd,

His very level bes',

Fur Christmas time de whole year roun'

An' all de time a res';

He axed to have de chicken roos'

Down on de lowes' limb,

An' turkeys jes' on top de fence,

In easy reach er him.

Come stately steppin', oh, good Lawd,
 'Pon yo' lily-white steed,
An' smash dem sassy niggahs down,
 An' bruise de sarpint's seed.
Dey howls at you de livelong night
 An' robs you of yo' sleep,
'Kase dey's too lazy fur to sow,
 An' got no crap to reap.



THE SWEETEST SONG.



NOW sing once more, my dear old harp,
And sing the sweetest song,
That ever from thy chorded strings
Burst fresh, and free, and strong.

Sing of the dark-brown eyes and hair,
That with my love belong;
Sing of the heart she gives to me,
And sing your sweetest song.

In other days—my boyhood days—
I've tuned thy twanging strings
To sing of other—fancied—loves;
Those loves have taken wings.

My good old heart, my strong old heart
Has turned to better things;
Its richest, purest love, old harp,
To this love closer clings.

I love her for the angel soul
That moves her every thought;
I love her for the generous heart
That in her soul is caught;

I love her for the beauties bright,
That with her life belong;
So sing of these, my dear old harp,
And sing your sweetest song.

CASTELAR.

To L. P. Coffin.



IS bitter to love her thus, he
said;

Tis bitter that she loves
me.

'Twere better to go where
death hath led,

Where war is cruel and
blood is shed—

Far better than thus to
be.

She hath a lord of her own—
is wed—

Forsooth a man of low de-
gree,

But many a league of land
outspread,

He holds by a fief, inherited,
And a vassal tenantry.

I have a fief; 'tis in my hand,

A blade that did never rust,

And East and West, in every land,

I held my own with the trusty brand,

But now it must sheathe in dust.

Why do I linger about her gates?

I seldom see her, alas!

And who but a laggard mopes and waits

By the window the wan moon tessellates

To see her shadow pass?

The gold of her hair has tangled me,

Yet I have never loved gold.

The white of her throat, and the ivory

Of her bosom, chained me in ecstasy

When her lips the secret told.

I envy the lily upon her breast,

The rose in her shining hair;

I chide the sun who lags in the west;

I wait in the garden she loves the best—

She promised to meet me there.

I held her close in my arms last night;

Oh, the pain of stolen bliss!

She checked me with grief that was half delight,

The loves that were wrong, the hearts that were right,

Clung close in that pleading kiss.

Her lord is brawny and strong of arm,

But comely and kind, men say;

The brute that is in him may take alarm,

When he knows her heart with its depth of calm

Has passed forever away.

Why tarries she yet? 'Tis very late,
And the night-bird bodeth ill;
But hist! I hear by the oaken stair,
Loud angry words—a cry of despair,
Ah, God! Now all is still.

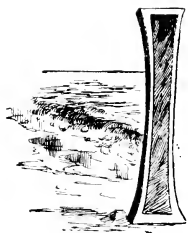
I knew no bars, I knew no bolts,
I knew no doors of oak,
I traversed the stairs and sounding floors;
The chambers were closed—the great carved doors
Fell to a thunder-stroke.

Oh rose! Oh lily! Oh poor white dove;
And the blood-stain on her breast,
And the parting lips still quivering—
Great God, I heard rude laughter ring,
By the cross, I stand confessed.

By the rood, I saw his brutal bulk
Stand midway in the door,
'Twas hard to slay so strong a man,
But I had slain the Saracen,
And her blood cried from the floor.

Little may vulgar strength avail
'Gainst arm that's nerved with steel;
He lies at the foot of a carven knight—
And I - I kissed her lips "Good night."
Good night! All peace, all rest go hence;
Good night to all but penitence.

ITA EST.

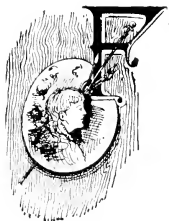


WALKED by the sea and picked up a shell,
 Thrown out on the scalloped shore,
And I listened to hear what it could tell—
 It crooned the city's dull roar.
I threw it far back, in the foaming sea;
 Its song was a dreary drone;
A story of sorrow and pain, to me—
 The memory of a moan.

Some flowers that grew by the homeward way,
 I picked as I strolled along;
They drooped and died with the waning day,
 And end of a vesper song.
'Tis easy to keep a glittering sin—
 They last until cast aside;
But fair, sweet prizes, we glory in,
 We've gathered, and they have died.



TACOMA.



FAIR princess of the West, and coming queen,
About thy throne of hills the silver sheen
Of fairest day is flung.

Yon snow-crowned king, thy regal guardian
stands:

His white-haired priests, uplifting holy hands,
Thy christened name have sung,
"Tacoma!"

His name is thine, and thou shalt wear it well,
So long as truth shall live, and song shall tell

Thy beauty and thy grace;
And from his hand, as master at a feast,
He'll give thee glowing days, from out the East,
To light thy lovely face.

Tacoma.

Amid thy woods, and o'er thy sail-flecked seas,
As thou art kissed by many an od'rous breeze,

Thou standest, regal one,
The pride of every loving soul that knows
Thy might and worth, and with it warmly glows
High pride of Washington,

Tacoma.

HIS ANGEL SLEPT.



FAIR of face and debonair,
Unbound sheaves of shining hair;
Open throated, winning eyes
Lives 'neath never-clouding skies;
Soul that's ever moulding art;
True and brave, with tender heart;
Takes the great world as it goes;
Loves the pansy and the rose;
Finds in every flower honey;
Hates the miser and his money.

High of mind and clanly proud;
Shrinks he from the rabble crowd;
Shuns the herd and loves his friends;
Scorns the truckling soul that bends;
Holds the sparkling goblet high,
Lowers it and drains it dry;
Guardian angel of the boy
Watch with him through every joy;
Ward off dangers that environ;
Let thy wand be rod of iron

'Mid the music and the bloom,
Soft caresses and perfume,
Where the fountains plash and play,
Where, though light, 'tis never day,
For the day is his in steep,

Dreaming dreams while reapers reap,
Poet-born, with fancy bright,
Plays and works he in the night;
 With no passion mezzo-graded,
 All sun-bright or somber-shaded.

Cold the winter wind now blows,
Lying deep the winter snows;
Hard and frozen is the way
Where he's wandering astray,
And the morning drives the dark
From the spot where, lying stark,
He who had been guarded well,
At the hand of demons fell
 Through the shadows came they creeping;
 Worn, his angel guard was sleeping.



COME, DREAMS.



Oh leagues! Oh leagues of mountain waste
That lie between my love and me!
Come, Sleep, with swift and blessed haste,
And span the rugged sea;
Come, Dreams! Oh, Dreams! I long for thee
To bring my idol back to me.

'Tis true, my darling baby love
My heart, my treasure and my soul—
The loving Father, up above,

In sleep doth lead us to the goal
Where, dreaming, I'm caressing thee,
And dreaming thou art kissing me.

Through all the dreary, weary day,
In all my waking hours,
I sigh along the heavy way
That lies between this love of ours;
But we can meet in dream-land bowers
And gather there love's sweetest flowers.



JIM MARLINSPIKE.



JIM MARLINSPIKE was a castaway,
On a far-off island shore;
He floated there on a banjo box,
And a shirt was all he wore -
If you should bar a startled look,
And a pain that then was his,
For too much damp had left with Jim,
A touch of the rheumatiz.

But Jim was a man of "Tapley" stripe,
And when things worried him,
He always looked at the pleasant side,
For that was the way with Jim,

And so it gave him joy, indeed,
When on that lonely shore,
He found his banjo safe in box—
And he asked for nothing more.

Some would'er pined for a bite to eat,
Or a suit of hand-me-downs,
But Jim just played his old banjo,
And laughed at Fortune's frowns.
The trade-winds played at hide-and-seek
With the skirt of Jim's brief shirt,
But he sat on a rock and played banjo,
And he played it too, right peart.





The pine trees there were pine enough
For such a man as him;
Not a soul on land, nor one on sea,
Was a bothering much of Jim.
The most contented man on earth,
Or, eke upon the sea,
Was that same jack-tar, Marlinspike,
With his banjo on his knee.
Old Crusoe pined for lots of things
When in that self-same fix;
He wanted friendship, home, and such,
To Jim all these were "nix."
He'd never known where he was born,
And what's more, didn't care,
And friendship he had seemed to think
Was a thing that didn't wear.

Therefore he stayed and gaily played
To whales and little fish;
And old Saint Tony never had
A crowd more to his wish.
At last one day, his G string broke,
And with that came a pain
That broke his heart, for now he thought,
He'd never play again.

So then he pined, from day to day,
A sorely troubled soul;
How glad he'd given his very last shirt
To make the G string whole.
He pined for a place where he could buy
Another such a string;
But hope was lost and Jim sat down
His death song for to sing.

A tender-hearted monster heard
Poor Marlinspike's sad wail—
The great big mammal-fish that's called
The true and righteous whale;
And straight away his whaleship went,
Right down to Whatcom flats,
And swallowed there a gunny-sack,
Cramfull of all size cats.

The G cat and the B cat too,
Likewise the slender E,
And wire to make the big A strings,
A cargo full, took he,
And then he hied him fast away,
To Jim's lone island shore,
And threw his string-truck on the beach
And laughed till he was sore.



Now when Jim Marlinspike beheld
 What this good whale had done :
He knew that 'mong the mammal sort
 A real friend he'd won.
He wiped his red and weeping eyes,
 And tuned his shell once more,
And Jim's playing yet, I think,
 Upon that island shore.



SANDY McCANN.

To S. O. Brooks.



O say that the hair of young Sandy McCann
Was auburn, was putting it fine, for the man
Hada head that just blazed, like the bird that we see
A driving his bill in the cotton-wood tree.
But Sandy delighted to stray from his home
And wander about 'neath the blue, ether dome.
'Twas thus it once happened, when near his life's
prime,
That Sandy was gone such a very long time—
A decade or more—that his business and kin
Much needed to know of the parts he was in.
And thus the great search was so ably begun
To find the locale of the wandering one.

His starting was traced to a place where a man,
Had met on the Mexican border McCann,
And a girl with red hair, about sixteen or so,
Said her father was Sandy, and ten years ago,
As she had oft heard, from her mother's own mouth,
Had shouldered his traps and had gone further south.

So trav'ling along, through the land of the sun,
Where people were gen'rally black-haired and dun,
One day they brought up, with a well-founded joy,
At a ranch where they saw a bright, red-headed boy,
Whose name was McCann, but his father, he said,
Left six years before and they thought he was dead.

Undaunted, the searchers forwent needed rest
And pushed further south, with their clue and their
quest,

Till worn out and hungry, one blazing hot day,
Far down in Tabasco on Campeachy Bay,
They ran into cover a red-headed child
Unkempt and disheveled, and very near wild.

But Sandy, the papa, had traveled some more,
So footsore and weary they turned from the shore,
Back over the mountains and on to the plain,
In hope to recover the trail once again,
And fortune soon blest, with its fullness, their zeal,
And turned threatened woe to the welcomest weal.

On a rough, wooden bench, by a "dobeys" deep door,
One eve, at the gloam, they saw Sandy once more.
He trotted a red-headed babe on his knee,
And sang an old song, with great gusto and glee,
So this is the story, about as it ran,
Of the fiery trail of one Sandy McCann.



THE GIRLS OF GONHOSE.

WITH APOLOGIES TO MR. RUDYARD KIPLING.



HOME, SWEET HOME," is a charming old song
And dearest of memories 'round it will throng,
But sometime to glide through the gate that's ajar
And "roam the wide world," mid its wonders afar,
And ramble away, to the ends of the earth
Will lighten a sorrow with leaven of mirth;
'Tis thus I have seen the sweet vale of Cohone
And danced with the maidens of Mahakadone.

I have ridden the horses of Stepduldagrec
And climbed the blue hillsides of Bezdarafee
And chased the gray gatline, and stalked the gelang,

From Odibus river to Lake Spanafang;
I've gathered the flowers that grew in the snow,
High up on the summit of Mount Daracrow,
And bathed with the mermaids of Yznaga Sea,
And eaten the fruit of the Santicoe tree.

But that, most ecstatic, quintessence of blisses,
Is honey distilled from the nectar of kisses
That lie on the lips of the girls of Gonhose,
Whose dress is the mist and whose breath is the rose.
The music they bring from the soft tamberlee
Is sweeter than songs of the famed Oberjee,
And, under the sun, are no jewels so rare
As the doden they wear in their radiant hair.

I've sipped the rich wines of the far Folitod
'Mid odorous zephyrs of fair Toltifod,
And lounged on the waves of the wrinkled Zandee
'Neath sails from the looms of old Caberdeecree,
Whose wool and whose web are the prismatic silks
That are spun by the hoojas of Gammerdatilks;
I've eaten the lotus leaf, smoked the Kadome
And forgotten the tune of the song of "Sweet Home."



OLD MART AN' ME,

To Col. George C. Gill.



OLD MART.

Hit's been so monstrous long ago it seems
jes like a dream,
Sence we was only chunks er boys - a
rough-an'-tumble team -
That useter dam the spring house branch
an' set up flutter wheels,
An' work so dead in arnest that we often
missed our meals,
An' sometimes fit en quarreled till we war
a sight to see,
An' frequent we got licked for that,
Old Mart an' me.

Time come we had to go to school - some furder en a mile -
But what we larnt, until this day, jis sorter makes me smile;
'Twas little mo' than nuthin', en we got it, inch by inch,
While the teacher lammed it to us, till we had the mortal cinch
On everything the old man knowed, plum to the rule of three,
But frequent we got licked for that,
Old Mart an' me.

We was raised on farms adjuin' with plenty all aroun',
But still we'd skip off, atter dark, an' pole away to town,
Three mile, up hill, ef 'twar a foot, an' jine the boys up there,

To eat sardines, and smoke see-gyars, an' have a sort of ture,⁹
Or rob a neighbor's million patch — for deviltry, you see
But frequent we got licked for that,
Old Mart an' me

At spellin' bees and singin' school, thar's whar we us ter shine;
We couldn't spell a little bit, ner sing so mighty fine,
But when it come to courtin' gals an' seein' of 'em home,
Why we was thar, an' you hear me, 'twas honey in the comb,
Then Widder Kane got married, an' we raised a shivaree —
But didn't we get licked for that,
Old Mart and me!

When finally the war broke loose, an' Mart an' me went in,
One time we struck a scrimmage that was livelier en sin;
We had it, back an' forrards, twict, acrost a cotton patch —
You never see'd, in all yo' life, a hotter shootin' match
I got a plug clean throo my leg, an' him one in the knee,
So, we got sorter licked at that,
Old Mart and me.

We've had some ups and down in life, and growin' kinder old,
With hearts as warm as ever, an' they never will get cold.
So fur as him an' me's consarned; not even
over thar,
When all are called to answer at the final
jedge ment bar,
For friendship's close to holiness, and blamed
ef I can see,
How we'll git licked a bit for that,
Old Mart an' me.



AN' M

JE SUIS PRET



It 'twere a sin to love you, madly,
And I were white as any angel is
I'd break the decalogue, most gladly—
From end to end then go and sizz.



LOVE'S JUBILEE.

Oh! when you go away, sweetheart.

What shall I do?

'Twill be a dreary day, sweetheart,

For I love you.

But in my life that love I'll fold,

And in my soul your image hold,

And keep it true,

My sweet for you.

Oh! when you come again, sweetheart,

What joy 'twill be!

Like vesper's soft "Amen," sweetheart,

For you and me.

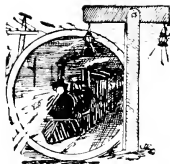
Then we'll forget the dreary day,

When, dear sweetheart, you went away,

And that will be

Love's jubilee.

RECOMPENSE.



THE whistle gave its signal slack;
The bell in warning measure rang;
The iron links complained, and eke
The heavy wheels their rail beats sang.
The pond'rous train moved slowly on,
Till, reaching yon broad stretch of plain,
It flew toward the east, and gone,
My love left me, in tears again

I cursed the train that bore away
The darling, all I love, from me—
But list! I bless the same to-day,
For that will take me, sweet to thee.



POET SCOUT.



How are you, grand old friend of mine? I'm
glad you've come again,
And brought your broad sombrero and your
Western poet-pen;
Come, "sit thee doon," old partner, and we'll
weave a little rhyme,
That's somewhat reminiscent of another
scene and time.

I'm thinking now, old friend of mine, when on Wyoming's plains
We met, where friendship first began to forge the golden chains
That ever'since have linked us two, and made us only one,
In trial or in jollity, in danger, fight or fun.

You fought the red-skin rascals, from Big Horn to the Grande,
And you've helped to build and populate the shining Western
land;
You've made a fame, old friend of mine, with knightly shield and
lance,
That in the story of the West will live beyond romance.

And so I'm glad to see you here, so gray and strong and tall,
Beneath your big sombrero with your buckskin, hair and all,
And we'll drink in sparkling water, from the health that in it lies,
A health to all the Western land, its rivers, hills and skies.

And we'll pray for God's good blessings on all that wide domain,
From dark Missouri's murky tide to Colorado's plain,
And o'er the Rockies to the sea, where morning's sunshine
 streams
Among the peaks and far across to where Tacoma gleams.

JULEY ANN.



OME say Ise cross an' cranky too,
An' mebbe dat I am,
Ise had enough to worry thoo
To aggrivate a lamb.

Ise had nine chillun in my day,
An' nary one is lef';
Dey all was tuck an' kyard away,
An' I'm here by mysef.

Ole master died when I wuz grown,
An' stated in his will,
Dat I mus' be Miss Susie's own—
Me an' de water-mill.

My chillun, dey wuz lotted out—
An', mind you, 'fo' dey's bawn,
Fur I wuz healthy, strong and stout,
An' sho' as las' year's cawn.

De fus' wuz Tom, dey tuck him when
He jis' wuz fo' year old.
An' foll'rin' him wuz little Ben,
An' den my Jane wuz sold.

An' Lu an' Bob and Tip an' Jim—
An' Sam, my crippled son,
Dey even mosied off wid him,
An' lef' me nary one.

Dem chillun's scattered 'ever'whar,
An' dunno who dey is,
But dey will know me ovah dar
When jedgment's sun is riz.'

I may 'pear monst'ous cross an' ill,
But Heaven knows I b'ar
No spite, er hate, er 'vengeful will
To block my way up dar.



A MEMORY AND A TEAR.



TIS noon of night, and from a long, lone walk,
I've come to sit me down and meditate;
To croon and ponder, musing with myself;
To mumble, in an old man's piping way.

That walk had been a hard and weary one,
Had I been 'companied by other thoughts
Than those that held me as I strolled adown
The wintry street—the hushed and quiet street,
Save for the restless wind, that blowing light,
Listless and wanton, thro' the bare-armed trees,
Made music fitting to my reverie,
So deep, and reaching to the past,
That being once again a boy, my limbs
Forgot the years they've marched along beside
Since lusty youth, in roseate glow, was mine.

In all the years, since then, I've seen the world
On many sides, and felt its jagged points,
As rolling in swift motion, on its poles,
It grinds the face of those who do not wear
Protecting Fortune's mask, impierceable.

I've sat within the shade of orange groves,
And heard in low, and sweet and witching strains,
Some far-off music, as of siren songs,
Weird-like, from wooded shores of placid lakes,
Soft o'er the listening waters steal along.

I've borne the cold of arctic heights, and dragged,
Half famished, o'er the sands of desert plains,
And strove in solitude, amid the wilds
And gloom of desolation lost.

I've stood upon a lonely isle, far out
Amid the sea, and yearning, hopeful, watched
The waste to catch a sight of saving sail,
And day by day saw, but with growing dread,
The crawling canyons of the deep upheave,

But in it all I've had a holy, sweet,
And blessed memory to 'bide with me—
My strong young manhood's first and cherished love,

And here's a great and faithful tear; one lone,
True, tender friend, of bright and bygone years
That, some decades ago, held in their arms
The long-lost love that I beheld to-night,
So far away, and yet so vividly,
Adown life's wonder-sided vista dim.

Welcome thou art, my fellow mourner, here
Beside the grave of buried hopes; welcome,
Thou sweet and pure good comforter of mine;
And mayst thou come again sometime, to **me**.
For with thee comes a gentle, tender touch
Of pity for Myself, that softeneth,

As with an angel's kind and soothing ways,
A heart that hath no other pain so sweet;
A heart that crying, bleeding with it all,
Hugs the strong anguish, for the blessed joy
It gave, when that young love was all the world,
And heaven,so pure it was, and blissful.



"TIS MORE THAN ALL



O sail! no sail!" the drifting sailor groans;

"No gold! no gold!" the toiling miner
groans;

"No fame! no name!" the weary poet sighs;

"No love! no love!" the heart in anguish
cries.

With all we get, of life, or fame, or gold,
Existence here is dark, and sad and cold,
Without that light and blessing from above,
One sweet and trusting, earnest woman's
love.



RHODA RAGLAND.

To Ed. R. Pritchard.



WAS the mornin' after Shiloh,
Way down in Tennessee,
I was crusin' 'round among the woods-
A friend of mine and me,
When I seed a little maiden
Who was settin' on a gun,
That was busted at the muzzle
From the work that it had done

She had throwed a bit of banner
Acrost her golden head,
An' when I ast her for her name,
She laughed and then she said,
"My name is Rhoda Raglan',

An' I'm waitin' don't you see,
For pappy dear to come back here,
Wif sompen good for me."

"We was livin' in the cabin,
In the clarin' over thar,
Where the little crick went rattlin' by
So sparklin' an' so clar,
But now the water's muddy,
An' it's bloody, an' the banks
Is trompled, an' my posies
Is jest ruined by them Yanks.

“Our cabin's full of hurted men,
They groaned the worstest way—
They was hurted in the battle
With we'uns yesterday,
An' ther arms an' legs a bleedin',
It was sich er awful sight,
I didn't sleep a little wink
The live-long night,

“So I've come, good Mr. Yank,
To wait for pappy here,
My mother went away to God,
Last winter was a year.
An' we was livin' all alone
In the cabin over thar,
An' why he don't come back to me
I think it's monstrous quar.”

She was a pooty five-year-old,
With eyes of deepest blue,
An' flossy curls an' dimpled cheeks,
With roses in 'em too.
I had some little kids at home,
Just like this battle waif,
And now I thanked the Lord above
That they were well and safe.

A minnie ball had pierced my arm,
That lay now in a sling;
The hurt was just a flesh-cut,
An' the pain a smartish sting,
But I had got it fairly
An' well enough I knew,
The helpless arm would take me home
Within a day or two.

So I plead with Rhoda Raglan
To go along with me,
An' maybe we would find her pap
Somewhar in Tennessee.
An' yit I know'd her father
Was away beyond life's ills.
So I tuck her to Kentucky
To my home among the hills.

We raised her jest as good an' true,
As ef she'd been our own,
Blood of mine and mother's,
And bone of our bone.
An' she's been as good a daughter
As any of the three,
An' a blessing to my homestead,
An' to mother an' to me.

She's thirty-six, or thereabouts,
I can't exactly tell—
But she married in the neighborhood,
And married monstrous well;
An' she's got a little daughter,
That prattles at my knee,
An' 'minds me heaps of Rhoda
Down at Shiloh—don't you see.



I.

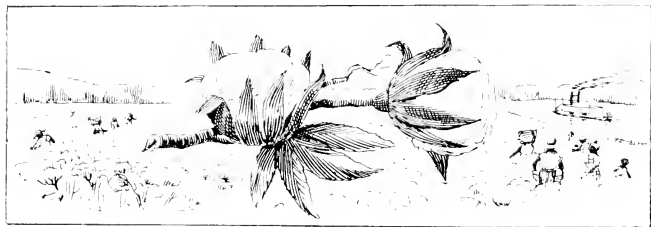


'TIS summer in the quiet land of bloom,
 'Neath skies that winter never knew;
 In forests deep the dusky cypress plume
 Nods where the wild-vine tendrils clew
 Among the humbler growth, beneath the shade
 Of centuried and hoary oaks,
 And where the rainbow-tinted sunbeams fade
 Under the long and trailing cloaks
 Of mosses, bannered to the lofty boughs,
 That weave a close and leafy screen,
 For nooks where fly-begoaded cattle browse,
 In covers cool, of grateful green.

II.

Before the facade of the deep, dark wood,
 The fallow-fields and pastures lie;
 And ripening harvests, teeming, rich and good,
 Give pleasing promise to the eye.
 Among the china and the orange trees,
 And flowers of myriad dye,
 And jasmine vines, that in each balmy breeze
 Their gay and golden showers fly,
 There stands, with open doors, a planter's home,
 And stillness reigns about its halls,
 Except the sound of bees around the comb,
 Or ring-dove's low and distant calls.

The sunflower droops in comely grace
Before the day-king's fervid rays--
A Clytie fair, who bends her modest face
Beneath Apollo's ardent gaze,
A shimmering haze is in the air,
The mocking bird his riot stills,
The river glints beneath the sun's fierce glare,
And mists hang o'er the far-off hills.
The pigeons croon beneath the eaving-frieze,
A kitten sleeps in "mammy's" lap,
And in a hammock, swung betwixt two trees
"Old marster" takes his noon-tide nap.



ALEXANDER SALVINI.



OW dreary, dull, would be this seething earth,
Were it bereft of what thine art doth show,
Of rich romance, of chivalry and mirth,
'Mong cavaliers and dames of centuries ago.
Upon the glass of this grand art of thine
Is blown a breath of odors from old Spain;
The perfumes of her flowers, fruit and wine,
In time of Honor's prime and brightest reign;
Thou bringest back the fair and palmy days
Of old Grenada's glory and her fame,
When minstrels sang for her their sweetest lays
And caballeros battled in her name.
And in thine art, as gallant, brave and gay,
As 'twere himself, Don Caesar de Bazan
Comes at thy call to charm the world to-day,
And Dumas' hero, Philippe D'Artagnan.
High in thy place, Salvini, 'mid the stars
That gem the sky of thy transcendent art
Thy friends are pleased to see thee shine, like Mars,
With ruddier light, thy brilliance to impart,
Thus thou'lt maintain thy sire's radiant fame,
Exalt the stage, perpetuate the things
That save to us each noble deed and name
That story tells and purest poet sings.

WASHINGTON.



HURRAH for the land of the setting sun!
Hurrah for the State of Washington!
Hurrah for the men, and women, and all,
Who came to make the forests fall!
Hurrah for every pioneer,
Who built his humble cabin here!

Hurrah for the day when first begun
The march from toward the rising sun,
When opening 'fore the axe and gun
This land was seen and doubly won!
Hurrah for the men with brawn and brain
Who brought fair Progress here to reign.

Hurrah for mountain, hill and plain!
Hurrah for Irish, Swede and Dane,
For English, German, French and Scot,
And every man who casts his lot
In this the fairest land beside
The blue Pacific's swelling tide!

Hurrah for the factories and schools!
Hurrah for the unity that rules—
The strength of enterprise that sends
White-winged ships to furthest ends
Of all the busy, bustling world,
Where'er the starry flag's unfurled!

Hurrah for the cities, towns and fields
And all their homes, and hopes, and yields!
Hurrah for the pulpit, press and pen—
Beneath the rule of worthy men—
And all the blessed good they've done
For our beloved Washington!

Hurrah for the new and gleaming gem!
That glints within the banner's hem—
That shines upon the nation's shield,
And in the flag's pure azure field!
Hurrah for the land of the setting sun!
Hurrah for the State of Washington!



MY MOTHER'S WEDDING RING.

To Tom J. Nicholl.



REMEMBER when that circlet
Was a heavy golden band,
And how chastely rich it shone upon
Her plump and pretty hand.
As boy and man, I've often seen
Pure gems, serene and rare,
Gleam brightly on the same dear hand,
So tender, true and fair.

Those jewels, like the fleeting joys
That come, and glow, and go,
With all of Fortune's transient gifts,
And many a weighing woe,
Have gone, as go all friends and days,
With every hope or care:
But still the plain gold wedding ring
Shines true and faithful there.

Those dear, old hands are trembling now
Beneath the weight of years
And fragile, thin, has grown the band
That linked her joys and tears,
But to a loving, grateful son
There is no blessed thing,
In all the world so holy as
His mother's wedding wing.



Edy Vignola.

CHRISMUS IN DE OLE TIME.



OW love, come, and sing with me
Within this home beside the sea,
And sit you daughter at my knee,
To help the homely rhyme
I'll sing of days ere you were born:
Of apples and the gathered corn;
Of darkies and the dinner horn,
And Chrismus in de ole time.

We'll tune the banjo to the lay,
And make the music light and gay,
For that, my loved ones, was the way
Of "we-all," in the prime
And happy days of long ago,
When Uncle Jube and Mammy Chlo'
Made jolly times like honey flow
For Chrismus in de ole time.

More love shines in black mammy's face;
More joy pervades the old home place;
The sun streams down with softer grace;
The distant church bell's chime
Has sweeter music in its ring;
More merrily the darkies sing,
And jollier greetings meetings bring,
In Chrismus in de ole time.

The stillicide of honey-bees;
The grateful scent of od'rous trees;
The balmy, perfume-laden breeze
 Of that dear sunny clime,
And all the happiness and glee,
Are borne on memory's wing to me,
At home beside this western sea,
 Of Chrismus in de ole time.

Christmas Eve—the old plantation—
 See the quarters blaze with light;
Hear the fiddle, bones and banjo;
 People there are gay to-night.

Listen to the leader sing:
 “Jine de song, you sassy niggahs.”
Hear the hearty chorus ring:
 “Dat’s all right, you call de figgahs.”

Dar’s ole Marster, good en true;
 Ah ha, oo hoo.
Ole Mistiss, she is dat way, too;
 Ah ha, oo hoo.
Young Mars Jim en sweet Miss Sue;
 Ah ha, oo hoo.
Lawd bless all ole Marster’s crew;
 Ah ha, oo hoo.

Sing wid all yo might en main,
Chrismus, it am here again;
Chrismus come but once a year;
W'en it come we has a sheer;
Ah ha, oo hoo.

Turkey, he am mighty proud;
Ah ha, oo hoo.
Struttin' roun' en gobblin' loud;
Ah ha, oo hoo.
I'll pick his bone en spread his wing;
Ah ha, oo hoo.
Chickin's neck I'se gwine to ring;
Ah ha, oo hoo.

Sing wid all yo might en main,
Chrismus, it am here again;
Chrismus come but once a year;
W'en it come we has a sheer;
Ah ha, oo hoo.

————

Thus, and long, in sweet concordance
Come the song and quaint refrain,
Trooping merrily and welcome
Down the years in mem'ry's train.

Daylight comes, and Christmas morning
Glides in through the Eastern ritt,
And the "people"—old and young ones—
"Ketch" the white folks' "Chrismus gift."

Mammy herds the whooping youngsters—
White and black —within her call;
Mistress scatters Christmas presents
From the quarters to the hall.

Master storms, in anger's pretense,
In and out, about the place,
But the soul of all his goodness
Glistens in his jolly face.

Love and joy with song and dancing,
In the olden Southern ways,
Tinted with the holy story,
Sped the happy holidays.

Now the banjo, harp of Southland,
Tuned with us in homely rhyme
Rest, and with it, 'neath the willow,
"Chrismus in de ole time."

SOME SINGIN'.



HEY talked so mighty monst'ous much
About de white folks' singin'
Up in de big high-steeple chu'ch
Hit sot my years a-ringin'.
So up I goes an' tuck a seat
Jis' whar de sexton p'inted,
As 'umble dar, at Jesus' feet,
As any onann'inted.

De ban' struck up, and I declar'
Hit nearly froze my livah,
An' almos' raised my kinky ha'r
An' made my marrer shivah.
An' when de singin' started in,
Away up in de gal'ry,
Hit sounded like a cotton-gin
A-screekin' fur a sal'ry.

Dar warn't no soun' like "hallalu!"
An' "Jerdan's stormy rivah,"
"Char-i-o' swingin' low fur you,"
As evah I could skivah.
Hit warn't de good ole shoutin' songs
We has at cullud preachin',
Whar glory an' de love-feas' b'longs,
Soul-sarchin' an' heart-reachin'.

GIVE THANKS



GIVE thanks! Give thanks! Hear the bells a ringing;
Give thanks! Give thanks! Hear the choir singing;
While some souls are crying out:
What shall I give thanks about?"
"My child is gone!" "My wife is dead!"
"My fortune's lost!" "I'll curse instead!"
"Cease, ye bells a ringing; hush the choir singing;
Woe my soul is stinging; heart in anguish wringing.
No place hath praise, within me here,
But all is anger, pain and fear."

Hold ye! Hold ye! List the promise given!
Blest shall they be, who, in sorrow driven,
Pass beneath the chast'ning rod,
Loving ever, trusting God.
Be strong; fail not, bend low the head,
So, in sweet peace, shall ye be led,
Ever in the joyful singing: To the cross I'm clinging,
Angels round thee winging, while the bells are ringing:
"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below." Amen

MARGARET



WILL I try to sing a love-song?

Indeed I will and sweet;

And from my heart as true and strong,

As in its throbbings might belong,

Had it a younger beat.

I'll sing of love that none have seen

Since Christ paid all the debt,

Till came sweet Charity's own queen,

As humble as the Nazarene,

Big hearted Margaret.

A wedded maid, and peerless,

With beauty none at all,

But a soul as pure and fearless.

And as crystal in its clearness

As Eve's before the fall.

Her spouse was simple Tenderness,

Her babes the waifs and strays,

The fatherless and motherless,

The little ones of dark distress

Along life's rugged ways.

The God above will greet thee
And He who said of old,
"Let little ones come unto me"
And blessed them at His holy knee,
Will take thee to His fold,
Thy statue and thy monument
In loving hearts are set,
The emblems of thy good intent,
The work to which thy soul was bent
Love sainted Margaret.



THE GOURD BESIDE THE SPRING.



HE gallant knight, in days of old,
Sang gaily flagon songs;
The monarch drained his cup of gold
And laughed his people's wrongs;
With goblets, flowing to the brim,
Bacchantes drink their wine,
But no alluring rosy rim
Brings song to harp of mine.

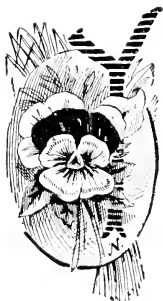
*Yet notes of memory sweetly come
In songs I love to sing,
Of hearty, healthy bumpers, from
The gourd beside the spring.*

The soldier loves his old canteen,
And sounds in song its praise;
The lover toasts his mistress queen
In wine-begotten lays;
The soul of poesy's outpoured
Alike to cup and king,
And all forget the brown old gourd
They drank from at the spring.

There's happiness in banquet halls,
Amid the bright and gay,
Where brilliant song the soul entralls,
And wit and wine hold sway;
But all the joys in memory stored
No sweeter thought can bring
Than those of draughts from out the gourd,
With Nell, beside the spring.



A PANSY PICTURE.



YOU gave to me one day, in thoughtless way,
A purple pansy bloom—I have it yet—
That day my heart was light and I was gay,
Now I am sad and trying to forget.
I pressed the cherished flower in a book:
It stained the leaves and left its image
there,
As on my soul is printed every look
You gave me then, and made the world so
fair.

Now won't you, darling, leave one little sign,
Before the time when you and I must part,
That some fond word or loving act of mine
Is printed in your kind and gentle heart,
To be my friend at court, until the day
When favoring fate shall give me rule, alone,
And I can come to bring my queen away,
To share my life and love's ecstatic throne?

THE SPEAR OF GOLD

Landry Des.



THE tiger's cub was gentle, and it played with a little child;

Its feet were velvet cushions, and its brown eyes meek and mild;

The changes came so softly that its playmate had not seen

The cruel claws in velvet and the brown eyes glinting green;

The child is lying, mangled, in the fierce and reeking jaws,

And the tiger's cub has torn him, 'neath his velvet-hidden claws,

* * *



I knew a youth
Of strength and truth,
And mein of a manly man,
Who marched along
With laugh and song
In Pleasure's troop and van!
High hope was his, and noble aim;
He sealed a lover's vow,

And climbed the dazzling steeps of fame,
Where Fortune kissed his brow.

The way was bright,
His heart was light,
And friends by legion came
In joyous throng,
To swell his song
And echo his sounding fame.
They lifted high the bowl, and drank
His health and sparkling wine,
Amid the bloom of the primrose bank
And under the shading vine.

In shade of vine,
From lees of wine,
A mocking monster came
And seized the boy
Amid the joy
And luster of his fame!
The wanton demon dashed the drink
With poverty and dread,
And drove the youth to ruin's brink—
The singing troop had fled.



With leers and limps
The comrade imps,
In howl, and grin, and yell,
Tore at his soul;
His manhood stole
And dipped him deep in hell;
'Mid horrors that no mortal tongue
Could ever tell aright,
They dragged his life and, screaming, flung
His honor into night.

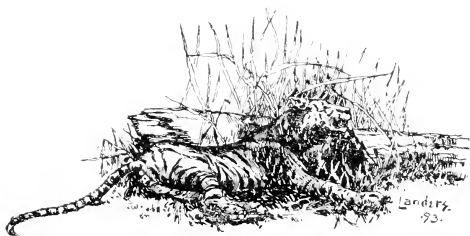
But strong and fast
There came, at last,
A good, gray man, and bold—
A monarch's peer
Who bore a spear
Tipped with a point of gold;
He drove the devil crew away
And raised the youth upright,
And led him back to honor's day
And love's sweet song and light.



The saved one sings;
The joy bell rings,
And friends have come again,
In joyous throng,
To swell the song
And praise the goodly reign
Of him, the hero, sage of Dwight,
Who came, as knight of old,
To send the imps of hell to flight
Before his spear of gold.

* *

The tiger's cub was gentle, and it played with a little child;
Its feet were velvet cushions, and its brown eyes meek and mild;
The changes came so softly that its playmate had not seen
The cruel claws in velvet and the brown eyes glinting green;
Then came a gallant lancer—a good, gray man, and bold,
Who slew the snarling tiger with his gleaming spear of gold.



OLD CATO'S CREED



'SE heard a monst'ous heap er talk
'Bout th'ology an' creeds,
But you hear me a shoutin' now,
Dar's nuthin' like good deeds
Jes' gimme sweet religion, please—
I don't keer what's its name—
De Methodis' or Babtis' kind
Will save you, jes' the same.

I'm on my road to Heaven sho',
An' aint got time to talk;
Ef you is gwine 'long wid me
You's got to walk de chalk;
Ole Petah's standin' at de gate
An' hit am wide ajar,

But jes' a lettah f'um de church
Won't take you in thoo dar.

He gwineter ax you, mighty close,
All 'bout yo' daily walk,
An' ef you holp de neighbor po'
Wid sompen else but talk;
He gwine to sarch you thoo an' thoo,
An' sho' as you is bawn,
Ef you aint right, you'll wish that Gabe
Had nevah blowed his hawn.

You'll see ole Mary shinin' dar,
An' Paul an' Silas, too,
An' Moses an' de other ones.
De ship er Zion's crew;
An' nary one will have a creed
Ascep' de chas'enin' rod,
An' all will sing a "hallalu'"
Aroun' de throne er God.



BABY'S MORNING.



WHEN morning comes and sunlight streams
In tender, soft and golden gleams,
And through the curtains dancing beams
Steal coily in the room,
My baby wakes in grave surprise,
And turns her great and wondering eyes
Toward the shimmering matin dyes
That tint the lily bloom.

'Tis double morn to thee, sweet one—
The morn of day and a life begun—
God grant thy day and life-time's sun
May ever sweetly shine;
That happiness without alloy,
That cannot fail or ever cloy,
And brightest rays of purest joy,
May bless each hour of thine.

WHERE MY HONEY SLEEPS



OFT the south-
ern moon is
shining;
Sly the star of
evening peeps

Through the honeysuckles, twining
 'Round the window where she sleeps—
 Where my honey, true-love, sleeps.
Gently now the wind is blowing;
 'Mong the leaves the dewdrop gleams,
While the scent of roses growing
 Fills the sweetness of her dreams,
 An' her face with love-light beams.

*Now, my mocking-bird, sing true,
Tho' the old owl hoots "to who!"
An' the ring-dove says "not you!"
So the mock-bird's softly trilling,
 From his trembling heart and mouth;
That sweet song, my soul is filling,
 For my honey, 'way down South.*

Down the winding river, drifting,
 I am coming, love, to you;
Through the trees the moonlight's sifting;
 'Cross my dugout, gum canoe,
 Coming, honey-love, to you.
In the deep, dark woods a-hiding,
 Pipes the whining whip-poor-will,
All the other birds a-chiding,
 With his plaintive "still, be still!"
 Like my heart, old whip-poor-will.

PARADOX.



SAW saw a poor old toper stand
At break of day, one chilly morn—
In this, our free, enlightened land,
An abject slave, distressed, forlorn—
Stand chilled, and aching to the core,
Before an open rum-house door,
And while within he trembling gazed—
His nerves unstrung and reason dazed—
Upon the liquids at the bar,
He said, in voice of yearning raised,
“Thou art so near and yet so far.”

A little later on I saw
A poor and ragged, starving wretch,
Stand shivering in the air so raw,
Before the broad, inviting stretch
Of cafe window, richly filled
With meat and game, but freshly killed,
And quail and poultry, neatly dressed,
And trimmed and garnished, water-cressed,
A tempting menu for a czar—
The ragged man the sight addressed,
“Thou art so near and yet so far.”

I saw a bankrupt, standing where
His yearning eyes could plain behold

A mass of jewels, rich and rare,
And stacks of silver and of gold;
He thought of bright and happy days,
Of business brisk and prosperous ways,
And then of creditors and debt,
And duns, that now his path beset;
His paper, worse than under par,
And cried, in tones of deep regret,
"Thou art so near and yet so far."

I heard a sighing lover plead
For pity from his favored fair,
He swore she was his faith and creed
And praised her eyes and auburn hair;
He knelt and prayed, and raved and tore,
And wept and shed his tears, galore.
She melted not to see him so,
But gave a strong, persistent "no."
Then, while he watched his fading star,
He groaned as he beheld her go,
"Thou art so near and yet so far."

I saw a soldier, old and lame,
Go begging for his daily bread;
I saw a poet strive for fame,
Who won it—after he was dead.
The world is full of gold and gear,
Of health, and wealth, and goodly cheer,

Yet poverty and dire distress
Prevail among us none the less,
And hearts will sigh, that wear a scar
And lips that Dead Sea apples press,
"Thou art so near and yet so far."

'Twas ever thus, that those who need
The most of pity and of aid —
And often those of greatest need —
Good Fortune doth the most evade.
The fickle dame will grind and rasp
The hand that seeks her toys to grasp;
'Tis he who delves the hardest way
Who wins a grudged and meager pay.
So here I loll, with my cigar,
While others whine their "lack-a-day,"
"Thou art so near and yet so far."



MOUNT OF THE HOLY CROSS.



WHERE Nature's God hath roughest wrought
Where spring the purest fountains;
Where, long ago, the Titans fought,
And hurled for missiles, mountains;
Where everlasting snows abide,
And tempest clouds are driven
Along the solid granite side
Of yawning chasms, riven
Deep in the Rockies' grandest pride,
That lifts its head to Heaven;

Amid the wilds, where awful rise
The giant peaks, that fathom
Night's starry depths and day's blue skies,
And brood above the chasm,
One monarch 'mongst the mighty hills
Rears high his summit hoary,
Like some grim king, whose legend fills
A page of olden story,
And heart o'er-awes and soul enthrills,
Before his regal glory.

The Holy Cross of Christian faith,
Above the royal velvet,
In beauty shines, an emblem wraith,
High on his beetling helmet;
Its white arms stretching through the sheen
Of silvery mist, are gleaming;
A talisman, the world to screen,
Hope's symbol, in its seeming;
A wonder grand, a joy serene,
Upon the ages beaming.



JUBE'S OLD YALLER DOG.



I SE be'n a-trav'lin' thoo dis vale
Nigh on to eighty years,
An' now my eyes is 'gun to fail
Wid weepin' bittah tears.
My po' ole wife is gonod above—
De way Ise gwine to jog -
An' all dat's left fur me to love
Is dat ole yaller dog.

My chillun's scattered here an' thar,
An' wouldn't know me now,
But we will pass de gates ajar,
At jedgment day, I 'low,
An' while I make de 'stressful rounds
Thoo all de damp an' fog,
Of dese yar wearisome low grounds,
Ise got dat yaller dog.

We's hunted, many a livelong night,
De 'possum an' de coon,
An' cotch 'em by de silvah light
Of many a southern moon.
We's built a blaze an' cooked de meat
'Longside a big back-log,
An' had some times mos' monst'ous sweet—
Jis' me an' dat ole dog.

An' long as I is stayin' here

Ise got one frien', I know;

Ef I is po' de dog don't keer

His head don't run on show.

An' long as I is got a bite

Er hominy an' hog,

Ise gwine to 'vide you jis' is right—

Wid dat ole yaller dog.



"LE REVE."



SLEEP, ah sleep, ye brave, and listen,
In your dreams to battle's hum;
See the foeman's armor glisten;
Hear the bugle-note and drum.
Heads that rest on unslung knapsacks,
'Neath your blankets and the night,
Close beside the bristling gunstacks,
Dream of morrow and the fight,
From the cottage-homes or manors,
Whence ye came, a nation's pride,
Prayers are rising for your banners,
And that weal may them betide.
Twixt the hearthstone and the bivouac,
Love is whisp'ring words of cheer;
Twixt the pillow and the knapsack,
Love, in dreams, brings lovers near.
When those heads are white with glory,
When the shadows from the west
Lengthen as ye tell your story,
In the vet'ran's ward of rest,
May no ingrate's word of sneering
Reach one heart of all the brave,
But may honor, praise and cheering
Guard old valor to the grave.

EDGAR WILLIS NYE.



I 'VE watched thy conspicuity,
It's growth and continuity,
And wished thy contiguity,
Bill Nye.

I've enjoyed thy lucidity
And thine artless timidity,
Combined with intrepidity,
Have I.

No other man's jocundity
Hath near so much profundity,
Nor yet the same rotundity,
Bill Nye.

And thou findest it luciferous—
The same as, argentiferous—
While the cheering is vociferous,
Aye, aye.

But now, discarding levity,
Assuming proper brevity—
I wish to thee longevity,
Bill Nye.

And I'm praying rever-ent-ly
That the sweet subse-quent-ly
Will deal with thee most gently,
Bye, bye,



IMPROMPTU .

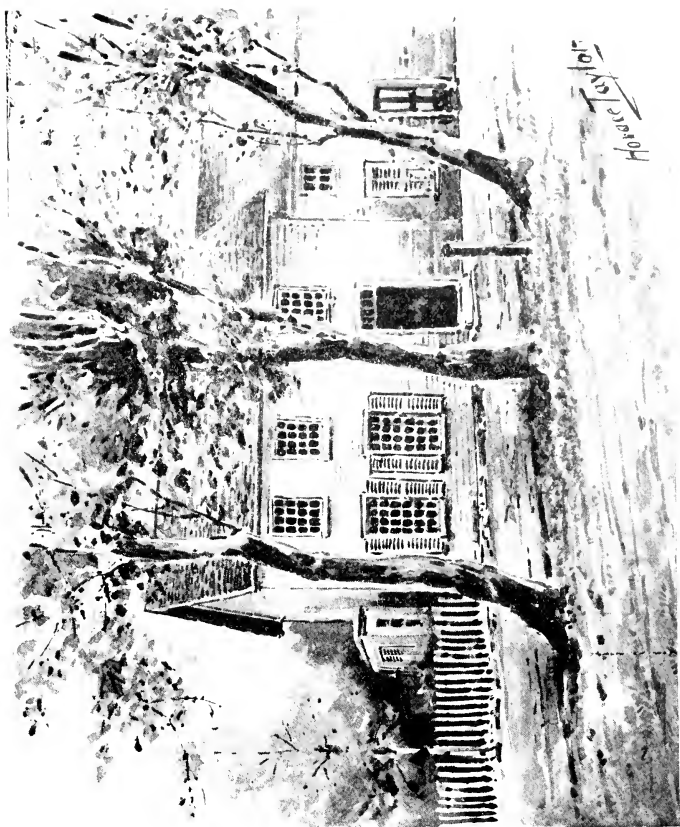


N the still and the noon of the night
I hear the tick of the clock,
As I muse by the flickering light
And list to the time unlock.

In the buzz and the hum of the day,
The tick of the clock is unheard,
But, nevertheless, it sings away
Its changeless good-bye word.

To moments consigned to the past—
The moments of time, that unfold
The way to the open door at the last,
And the gate to the life untold.

Hotel



MY VILLAGE HOME.

To Oppie Read.



IN Memory's halls my dear old home,
And boyhood's bright and happy days,
Shall live with me where'er I roam,
And light me with their gladsome rays
Along life's hard and thorny ways.

Long years had passed, and many friends
Were wishing I would come again —
And others too—for Fate oft bends
Before the throne of years, like grain
Before the wind and hail and rain.

As thus a welcome I had earned
Of hearty, good, and kindly will,
With joy my wandering steps I turned,
And sought my old home on the hill,
And those who fondly loved me still.

Just where the turnpike rounds a ledge,
O'ergrown with flowers, turf and moss,
Where, underneath, a thick-set hedge
Caught many an autumn's heaps of dross,
That northwinds from the branches toss,

My heart was gladdened once again
By sight of what, in fitful gleams,
Had oft been pictured to my brain,
In slumber's fancy—blessed dreams—
My mountain home, its hills and streams.

The sun just tipped the trees with light,
Their lengthening shadows fell by mine,
And in the far-off distance, bright
I saw the gleaming steeples shine,
And sunset gild the waving pine.

I gazed enraptured on the scene—
Below, the vale, beyond, the town
Just peeping through its leafy screen,
And stood there till the sun went down,
And darkness gathered all around.

Then on with eager haste I bent
Across the bridge and up the road,
And to my limbs new strength was lent,
And lighter grew my heavy load
As near and nearer home I strode.

The stage coach, and its weary four,
Came slowly up the stony hill,
And save the mill-dam's sullen roar,
The night was silent, calm and still;
Hushed e'en the music of the rill.

But when the driver wound his horn,
A hundred watch-dogs bayed aloud;
The hills threw back the notes in scorn,
And tower'd higher, darker-browed,
Beneath their crowns of silv'ry cloud.

I strolled on through the quiet street,
Where tall old trees, on either hand,
Wept dew-drops, bowed, and seemed to meet,
And sighed, while gentle breezes fanned
The face of this, my native land.

I stood a moment by the gate,
Before a little cottage door
Where oft I'd lingered sadly late
With one I loved in days of yore—
Love now, and shall forevermore.

A lamp within sent mellow light
Far out into the darkness wild,
And on the curtains, pure and white,
Were blent, in shadow-pictures mild,
A kneeling mother and her child.

I knew it was my heart's first love,
Whom bitter fate had torn from me—
To waft her orisons above,
She knelt, her child beside her knee—
It was my boy-love, Ella Gree.

Then lifted was my heart with hers,
To that bright realm beyond the sky,
Where angel voices, 'mid the spheres,
Chant " Blessed be the Lamb on High,"¹⁸¹
In sweetly sounding symphony.

I prayed that Heaven's blessings should
Forever circle 'round her brow;
That smiling Fortune kindly would
Her life with gracious gifts endow,
And endless happiness allow.

* * * * *

Of those who were my schoolmates dear,
With rosy cheeks and happy hearts,
I found them aged, worn and sere,
Engaged in wealth engendering arts
And chasing treasures in Life's marts.

Around them clustered boys and girls,
Just such as we in by-gone days;
Whose joyous shouts and dancing curls
Brought back to me, in halcyon rays,
The golden time that never stays.

I lived my young life o'er, among
The scenes my boyish days had known;
In sylvan aisles, where echoes rung
To laugh or shout, or mocking moan,
In clear and wild and startling tone.

Sometimes along the green hill slopes
I rambled with my schoolmates' boys,
And felt how Age bears off Youth's hopes,
And tramples o'er our vain-sought joys,
And bursts our airy bubble toys.

These little comrades led me 'round
A foot-path on the mountain side,
Where 'twixt the hills, with mighty bound,
A torrent flings its sparkling tide
Down to a lake, deep, blue and wide.

And then through caves; in brooks and mire;
O'er fallow-field; through wood and brake,
Now picking berries from the briar,
Now skipping stones upon the lake,
Or resting for some laggard's sake.

Then through the graveyard, by the wood,
Where sweetly bloomed the wild vine rose;
There once the church and school-house stood;
There many dear-loved friends repose,
And still that old-time graveyard grows.

A thicket covers now the ground
That many a year had bloomed with corn.
Where, as a boy, I've followed round
The plowman, many a rosy man,
And with him blessed the dinner horn.

Old Winter's bleak and chilling wind,
And rattling sleet and driving rain,
A grand old forest used to find
On yonder broad and level plain,
Now covered o'er with golden grain.

The house wherein my father dwelt,
And where his father's head grew gray;
Beneath whose roof my mother knelt
And taught her children how to pray;
Has, like those loved ones, passed away.

Now, far from all, 'tis joy to think
Remembrance yet hath left her smiles,
My heart to home she still doth link;
Her potent hand blots out the miles,
And visions sweet my life beguiles.



A MODERN TEMPLE.

To Sam I. Stone.



NOT many short and fleeting years,
With all their hopes, and joys, and fears,
Have marched unhalting to the dead,
With steady, stern and silent tread,
Since o'er the hills and valleys here
The red man chased the panting deer,
And by the dark Missouri's tide
The warrior wooed his dusky bride;
Not long ago, where now we stand,
With blessings rich, on every hand,
The war-whoop through the forest rang,
Among the pines the wild winds sang;
The screams of eagles in the air
Met echo in the gray wolf's lair;
The bison, with his shaggy mane,
Grazed, all unharmed, upon the plain;
The paddle of the light canoe
Flashed where the water-lilies grew;
In nature's garb the land was drest,
From mountain's foot to craggy crest,
And all was fresh, untouched and wild,
The free home of the forest child.
But soon, from toward the rising sun,
Was heard the white man's axe and gun;

The forest bowed before his hand,
And as a garden bloomed the land;
The ploughshare turned the virgin soil,
And rich rewards repaid the toil
Of every hardy pioneer
Who built his humble cabin here.
Fair cities decked the boundless west,
And here, the fairest and the best
Sprang up, as if the builder's arm
Was aided by a magic charm,
And soon o'er hill, and vale and stream,
Was heard the wild and startling scream
Of swiftly-flying, fire-led steed,
Dashing along at wondrous speed,
And scattering here, far and near,
Wealth and strength in his proud career
And thus, among the gray foot-hills,
Spires and homes, and shops and mills
Have risen as though genii hands
Had wrought where this fair city stands.

The rarest of the glist'ning gems
That deck the city's brow—
The brightest in her diadem,
Is this we're setting now;
And he who gave this temple name,
Shall crown the beauteous queen,
And coming years shall sing his fame
And keep his memory green.

Each lovely Muse, who has a place
 Within this temple grand,
His dreams, and waking thoughts, shall grace,
 And bless his open hand;
For 'neath the sun, no fairer shine,
 Since Delphi, lost so long,
Was ever lifted to the Nine
 Of Art, and Soul, and Song.

'Neath this broad dome, night after night,
 For many a coming year—
'Neath all the golden, dazzling light,
 From yon bright chandelier,
Shall come the man, the maid, the dame,
 To drink from pleasure's cup,
And see the actor strive for fame,
 And hold the mirror up.

The walking thoughts of Avon's bard,
 His hero, king and clown,
His guileless maid, and bearded pard,
 And monk, in cowl and gown,
Shall often picture, on this stage,
 The passions, loves and hates,
Of every nation, land and age
 Outside the pearly gates.

The soldier, lady-love and king,
Who came at Bulwer's call,
Shall make their gallant speeches ring
And echo through this hall,
And birds of song their notes shall trill
'Mid orange groves and palms,
And every heart shall feel the thrill
Of music's potent charms.

Here England's pursy Knight shall wince
Before the Windsor fays,
And Denmark's melancholy prince
Shall call his mimic plays,
And handle Yorick's fleshless pate,
And break Ophelia's heart,
And taming handsome, shrewish Kate,
Petruchio 'll play his part,

Here Lear, "every inch a king,"
Shall wear his monstrous woes,
And Juliet to her lover cling
Till death's releasing throes;
Macbeth shall rue his murd'rous deeds
In crime's entangling mesh,
And Shylock, with revengeful greed,
Demand his pound of flesh.

And hunch-back Richard, cruel, vile,
 Shall meet his Richmond here,
And on great Caesar's fun'ral pile
 Shall fall the Roman tear.
The jealous Moor shall send above
 Sweet Desdemona's soul,
And Pauline prove that woman's love
 Outweighs the power of gold.

Bright tears of joy shall dim the eye
 For Darling Jessie Brown,
Who hears, while others 'round her die,
 The welcome slogan's sound.
Here poor old Rip shall totter in
 To seek his little cot,
And find how, in Life's rush and din,
 We are so soon forgot.

The earth, the sky, the boundless sea,
 And every race and age,
Before these scenes shall gathered be
 Upon this spacious stage.
Here Pleasure with her smiles shall bring
 Surcease from daily cares,
And dullen Sorrow's sharpened sting,
 And lift the woe she bears.

THE OLD LOG CHURCH.



OLD walls, in memory's halls,
With roses 'round it clinging,
A picture rare, of antique air,
The old log church is swinging.
Of timbers rough, and gnarled and tough,
It stands in rustic beauty,
A monument to good intent
And loyal, Christian duty.
The forest trees, kissed by the breeze
Of early autumn weather,
Stand grimly by, and seem to sigh
And bend their boughs together.
They seem to feel that woodman's steel
Will come to end their glory,
And whisper low, and soft and slow,
Among their leaves, the story.
Down by the mill, and up the hill,
And through the hazel thicket,
And o'er the mead, brown pathways lead
Up to the rustic wicket.
And by these ways, on holy days,
The village folk collected,
And humbly heard the Sacred Word,
And worshipped unaffected.

Sweet Fancy's art and poet's heart
Can see the old-time preacher
And village sage, now turn the page
As minister, or teacher.

For in the church, with dreaded birch,
On week-days he presided,
In awful mien, a tutor seen,
'Twixt lore and licks divided.

But where it stood, in dappled wood,
A city sprang to life,
And jolly noise of barefoot boys
Is lost in business, rife.

With years now flown, the children, grown,
Are launched on life's mad billows;
The pretty maid is matron staid,
The master's neath the willows.



THE KENTUCKIAN'S LAMENT



I USTER live in old Kaintuck some forty year
ago,

An' come back here again, to stop, a week
er two, er mo',

But now I'm goin' back out west, an' stay
thar too, my son,

Kase I don't like the changes that the times
has gone an' done,

Thar uster be a little crick a runnin' 'neath
this hill,

An' funder down thar uster stan' a monst'ous
fine old mill;

I've waded in that little crick, an' fished fur
minners thar,

An' watched the mus'rats divin' in the water
fresh an' clar,

I uster ride a grist to mill—a sack er Injun
cawn—

Jis many a time, in them old days, so long 'fo'
you was bawn;

An' me an' all the yuther boys—in winter time,
you know—

Was parchin' cawn, an' swappin' lies ontell we
had to go,

That little crick has gone plum' dry, the mill
is all to' down,
An' blamed ef they ain't tuck the spot to build
er onry town,
An' whar the big-road uster run thar's growin'
weeds an' grass,
An' thar's a cut, clean thro' the hill, fur railroad
kyars to pass.

Them sheli-bark hick'ry trees is gone, whar
me an' yo' Aunt Sue,
Has gather'd nuts, so many falls when we was
size er you;
An' over yan, whar houses stan', along the
south hill side,
Thar stood the woods, an' pawpaws growed an'
possums uster hide

The boys as uster play wihn me, when I was
but a kid,
Has all turned gray—cep' them that's bald—
an' some the ground has hid;
An' stid er jeans, an' home'ade socks, an' all
the like er that,
Sto' close is all the go, mer son them an' the—
bee-gum hat.

The sasser ain't no longer used to po' yo' coffee
m,

An' eatin' with yo' knife has grow'd to be a
mortal sin;

An' what is wuss than all the rest, an' seems to
me mos' quar'

Cocktails, an' sich like truck as that, has
knocked out whisky clar.

These things is much too much for me. It's
broke my heart in two,

It's ru'nous to the country, an' it aint'er
gone' ter do;

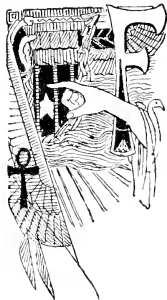
I'm goin' back—you hear me shout—clean
back to Washin'tun;

I want'er find Old Skockunchuck, an' stay
thar, too, mer son.





IN DEATH AND DEATHLESS FAME.



FROM every land and clime beneath the sun,
Peoples had come and brought their cunning arts
And mysteries, their handiwork and ways
To build, to beautify and dedicate
The strange White City, that majestic 'rose
Southward along the inter-ocean shores
Washed by the waters of Lake Michigan.

Among the triumphs there, of classic trend,
The columned peristyle and chaste facade,
The arches and the monuments, that stood

In pleasing and imposing mold and height,
Upon the now historic ground, was one
Exalted tower that lifted, snowy white
Its square and sturdy bulk, strong and severe,
Above a mighty pile that held such stores
As could have stood a siege and amply fed
For months dependent multitudes of men.

The fervid sun had passed the noontide line,
And pansy dials marked his slow retreat,
When bursting from the tower's dizzy top
A spurt of flame, like wicked serpent's tongue,
Invoked the startling fire alarm and called
A band of brave and hardy men to fight
A foe that never mercy shows, and takes
No quarter, no defeat but utter death.

Like warriors of olden time who scaled
The high and massive walls and battlements,
Grim bulwarks of a bastioned citadel,
Dauntless, these heroes of a better day
Climbed to the tower's top, and found the foe
Had lured them to an ambushade where death
Had hid to snatch them, living, to his den.

Far down below, against the tower's base,
The raging beasts of flame, insatiate, gnawed,
And 'mid the smoke and heat that 'rose
To choke and grill the fire-fighters there,
And melt away their foothold, balked they stood,
While horror-stricken multitudes looked on.
Among them veterans of many wars,
Who groaned, and wept, and shuddering turned away,
Helpless to aid these heroes, duty caged,
That gazed with mute despair into the face
Of terrible destruction, and waving
Farewell to hope on earth, and to the world,
Sprang into death and glory-guarded fame.

COMING TO ME.

To Vera



VER the bay on the steamer
At noon of a lovely day,
'Mid sights for a poet-dreamer
To dream of by the way;

Out on the long pier, reaching
Far in the blue of the water;
Out where the gulls are screeching,
Cometh my darling daughter.

Away from the land of flowers;
Away from the Golden Gate,
Where a grand young city towers,
She comes as I longing wait.

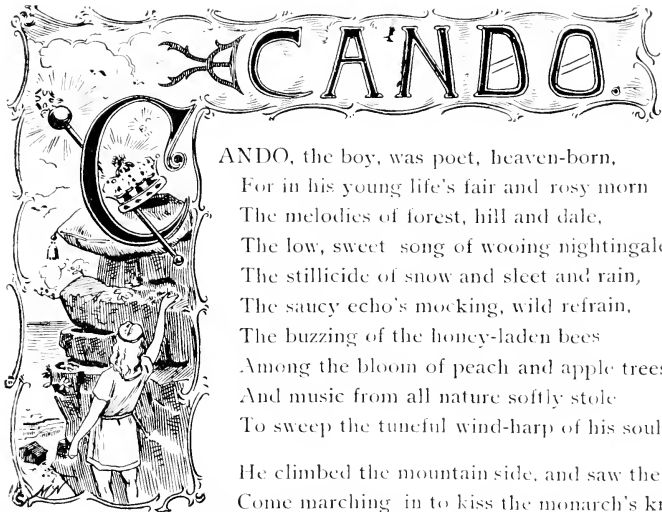
Over the rock-ribbed mountains,
White with the living snow,
Along by the frozen fountains
That in the moonlight glow.

Over the hills and pampas,
Where frost at morning gleams,
Where the wild deer frightened scampers,
Along by the babbling streams.

She comes to my heart that was crying;
Coming o'er hill and lea;
On wings of love she is flying,
Coming, thank God to me.

Whizz, Oh wheels of the engine!
Dive thro' tunnel and gorge,
Swift as the fishing penguin,
And sing as ahead you forge.





ANDO, the boy, was poet, heaven-born,
For in his young life's fair and rosy morn
The melodies of forest, hill and dale,
The low, sweet song of wooing nightingale,
The stillicide of snow and sleet and rain,
The saucy echo's mocking, wild refrain,
The buzzing of the honey-laden bees
Among the bloom of peach and apple trees
And music from all nature softly stole
To sweep the tuneful wind-harp of his soul.

He climbed the mountain side, and saw the sea
Come marching in to kiss the monarch's knee,
And, in its slow and undulant retreat,
Spread out its ermine carpets at his feet.

The fair, the good, the beautiful and true
Were to his rhythmic life poetic dew;
Fair Genius lent her brightest lamp to light
Her every step and bless his gladdened sight,
And Cando sang in strong, ecstatic song,
Of what he saw and heard, the whole day long

Thus as he sang, at every rounded pause
His playmates clapped their rapturous applause,
Till fierce Ambition seized the poet boy
And stole away his adolescent joy.
Onward to manhood, hand in hand with fame,

Rushed Cando; and the glory of his name
Rang through the State, borne on the cadent breeze
'Mid loud hazzas, and then across the seas;
Till in all lands, on every babbling tongue,
The wonder of his dazzling fame was sung.

Mellow and rich, from his enraptured shell,
Glowing and strong, the sounding numbers fell;
He tuned no more a gentle harp to win
The plaudits of his youthful kith and kin,
But eager sought the tribute and acclaim
Of them of high and mighty name and fame.
Till strong he stood, in glory and command,
And on a throne, magnificent and grand,
Young Cando sat and gazed above the crowd,
A monarch high and laurel-crowned and proud.

From distance dim, beyond the mighty throng
Came faintly now the reapers' harvest song,
No more heard he the loving voice of home,
The tinkling herd-bell in the soft'ning gloam,
Or lusty crow of doughty chanticleer
Were sounds too far for Cando's kingly ear.
Fame's vibrant tongue had whelmed the homely strains
Of Love's dear song and lullaby's refrains—
He lived to learn that grand, exalted state
To lowly born is mockery of Fate.



THE POET KING.

To Charles Eugene Banks.

QUIET man, of gentle face,
Yet noble mien and courtly grace,
To need and sorrow wed;
For lack of gold his worth untold,
And jealous Fame speaks not his name,
But waits till he is dead.

He sat beside a limpid stream
And saw its lucent waters gleam
In jewels, rich and rare;
And in the hue of Heaven's blue
An angel face of gentle grace
Was sweetly mirrored there.

He saw the flowers bloom and blush
From cordial morn till evening's hush,
And listened to the lay
Of cooing dove, so full of love,
And drank the breeze that kissed the trees,
In happy, hidden play.

He lived in contemplation high,
Of all the glories of the sky,
And sweetest lessons took
From earth and air; the bright and fair
Of every place and age and race;
And read from Nature's book.

And now he sits upon a throne,
A monarch in a realm, his own,
And holds the universe
Within his grasp, with tender clasp
A regal king with soul to sing;
But stript of scrip and purse.

Now list the music of his shell,
And hear his raptured accents tell
Of pure and noble things,
With minstrel's art, and poet's heart,
He fills the bowl that soothes the soul,
And plays upon its strings.



JIM'S LETTERS.



O' little Jim! I think er him,
An' somethin' in me cries,
These latter days, when thar's a haze
Comes in his mother's eyes.

Jis now an' then, I see it, when
She's thinkin' of the boy
Who went away one summer's day
An' tuck his mother's joy.

'Twas in the time of our prime;
Grim war was callin' loud,
When little Jim stepped out so prim
An' han'some, game an' proud.

'Twas sorter so I couldn' go—
I had so much to do,
To work an' find for them behind,
An' see the old folks through.

But little Jim, whose eyes was dim
For jes a second's flight,
He up an' 'lowed he'd be the crowd
To do the family fight.

But Jim could write as well as fight,
An' when his letters come,
Up at the head, in blue an' red,
W'as flags an' fife an' drum.

Indeed an' truth, that little youth
 Had pictur's by the score,
An' every time he writ a line,
 He sent us one, or more.

But Nancy said 'at when she read
 What Jimmy had to tell
It holp her through, for then she knew
 'At he was safe and well.

But atterwhile, the faint-like smile
 Of Nancy, faded out;
The mail was dumb—no letters come
 An' hope was drown'd in doubt.

The other men come home again,
 But Jimmy wasn't 'long—
In battle's strife his brave young life
 Had j'ined the hero throng.

An' now I know dear Nancy so,
 Her eyes with tear-drops dim,
Tell me right then, she's read again
 Them pictured notes from Jim.

DAUGHTERS OF AMERICA.

To Gen. George P. Smith.



Ring out, ye bells, your sweetest chimes;
Sing, all ye poets, dulcet rhymes;
Shout loud, ye crowds, in strongest praise;
Shine out, fair sun, in softest rays,
And dance ye rippling waters.

For Freedom's sons will sing a song,
That in a chorus, high and strong,
Shall sounding ring, from sea to sea,
Whose grandest harmony shall be,
America's true daughters.

Oh, they are loyal, brave and true,
And fair the red, and white and blue,
That in the nation's colors rise,
Shine in their cheeks and brows and eyes,
And glow upon their banners.

From ocean shore to mountain crest;
From north and south and east and west;
From all the bright and beauteous land,
They come, a blessing laden band,
And singing sweet hosannahs.

With cheering words from such a mouth
As thine, oh daughter of the south!
And love from such a loyal breast,
As thine, oh daughter of the west!

 The sons can never falter,
And while in north and east shall stand
The loyal, helping, sister band,
Sweet Freedom's day shall know no night,
But ever shall the flame glow bright
 Upon the country's altar.



A COMING MASTER.

T. B. Arthur Johnson.



I SIT upon my vine-clad porch—
'Tis summer's ardent weather—
And watch the breezes toying with
The thistle's downy feather.
My once brown hair is white as snow;
My hands are thin and wrinkled,
But better eyes have never yet
In such an old head twinkled.

A mile away and up the road
I see a horseman riding;
He's handsome, even thus afar,
His noble beast bestriding;
I see my daughter's tender look,
As wistfully she gazes,
And mother watching, 'neath her lids
The blush the rider raises.

That gallant horseman coming here
So often at sun-setting,
And mother's anxious looks with tears
That oft her cheeks are wetting,
Are signs to me, that growing old,
Some day I will awaken
To find my place as master here
By that young horseman taken.

RENAISSANCE.

To B. Arthur Johnson.



WAS in the fairest season of the year,
That comes to where the yellow Tiber flows,
Southward, among Italia's sunlit hills,
And when the sweetest bloom of Latium blows,
With staff and dog I strolled along the streets,
Then out, and far away from modern Rome
Adown a fruit-tree shaded road that led
Beside the walls of many a lordly home,
Then on to Tusculum, the place where lie
The moss-grown ruins of the gleaming pile
That great Lucullus bravely built, ere yet
The gentle Nazarene, with God's sweet smile,
Had come to bless, and save the world, and die.

I wandered mid the crumbling walls, and mused
Upon the scenes, that centuries ago,
Had been enacted there in luxury,
And of the wealth and splendor, and the flow
Of wit and wine among the Roman lords;
Of beauties of the time, in robes that clung
In graceful folds about their faultless forms;
The singers and the dulcet songs they sung,
Where now the lizzard and the winking toad
Lived undisturbed, and vapors damp and dank
Arose from rotting weeds and scum-hid pools,
And where the gliding snakes, white bleached and lank
Slid in and out, in this their foul abode.

Akimbo, 'mid the ruins, here and there,
 Stood broken marble columns, 'gainst the walls,
And, tumbled from their niches, statues lay,
 Chipped and defaced, along the weed-grown halls.
Upon a mound of crumbled stone, I spread
 My mantle out, and half reclining there
Petted the dog, and fed him from my pouch,
 Then, drowsied by the warm and sluggish air,
Fell fast asleep, my dumb friend guarding me.
 In fantasy of dreams I saw and heard
Some strange and pleasing things of long ago,
 And memory caught and treasured every word
And sign, of that ecstatic reverie.

The white walls of the villa stood again,
 As high and clean as in the days before
Decay's first touch had come to start the work
 Of ruin, and to break and topple o'er
The towers tall, and tear the facades down.
 The breath of summer odors floated through
The halls and corridors, and fountains sprayed
 Cool waters on the tropic plants that grew
About their bases, and redoled the air
 With rich perfumes, the scent of gaudy bloom
Half hid beneath the foliage darkly green,
 And silken curtains from far Asia's loom,
In graceful drapings screened the portals there.

Yet silence reigned, save the soft sighs of winds
That rustled the rich hangings of the walls,
And gently played, in listless, wanton mood,
Where flowers bloomed within the frescoed halls.
Deserted of all living things, an air
Of mystery dim, as in cathedral aisles,
Pervaded all, and ghostly shadows fell
Athwart the bolts of light from day's bright smiles
That shot in long and golden lances through
The high and latticed transoms of the doors.
Then day bowed low before the sable plume
Of night that laid her moonbeams on the floors,
And lent the shimmering, light a softer hue.

The statues stood again, upright, of gods,
Of satyrs and of nymphs, within the place,
And soon a babel 'rose of ancient tongues;
A revel of a Pantheistic race.

Within an alcove, near to me, I heard
A gross old bacchant tell, with laugh and sigh,
A sweet young naiad, of a time one night
When Horace with his Lesbia, drew nigh
To him, and in his shadow kissed the girl,
And wound his arm about her waist, and held
Her head upon his breast, while breathing low
The music of his poesy, that welled
Like silver fount, and pure as Oman pearl.

"Think thou of that," he said, "and yet, perforce,
I stood as calm as marble statues must,
But never will my memory lose the scene
Till all of us have crumbled into dust.
The Phrygian king, when standing to his lips
In waters cool, with fruits above him hung,
Dying of thirst and hunger, did not feel
Such agony as then my spirit wrung.
Oft when Lucullus gave a brilliant feast,
A guest came near this marble form of mine,
Goblet in hand, and I, a bacchant too,
Could catch the fragrant odor of the wine,
And thinkst thou not Tantalus suffered least?"

And other busts and statues held converse,
Of poets, wits and sages, of the day
When Rome sat proud upon her seven hills,
And o'er the world, as mistress held her sway;
How at the sumptuous feasts within those halls,
When rich Lucullus, wealthy from the spoil
Of eastern victories, about him held—
Far from the city's din and mad turmoil—
The beauty and the chivalry of earth.
They spoke of grand Mæcenas, who was friend
To young Lucretius, Virgil, and the rest,
Whose rich and never-dying verse should lend
Immortal name to Roman deeds and worth.

I woke benumbed and chilled, for coming night
Had brought its added dampness, and I found
The dog had slain a score of venom'd snakes,
And some lay writhing yet, about the mound.
They'd sought to wound me as I slept, but that
True friend, the trusty dog, had met them there,
Else, with my classic dream, I'd been undone
By reptiles that, like other cowards, dare
Smite but the helpless; and the vision taught
A lesson that, perchance, is old to me:
Build all you may, 'twill crumble into dust,
But love, and thought, and song, will ever be,
Though temples fall and riches come to naught.



